New Resource Warns Families About the Dangers of Snorting Opioids

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A new educational blog from ReVIDA® Recovery, ?Snorting Opioids: What Are the Signs??, is helping families across Appalachia recognize when prescription or street opioids are being snorted instead of swallowed or injected. The piece explains what this form of use looks like, why people choose it, and how quickly it can lead to opioid use disorder (OUD), overdose, and long-term health problems.

The blog opens by clarifying that opioids aren?t only taken as pills. Prescription medications like Vicodin® or Percocet® can be crushed and inhaled, and heroin or fentanyl may be sold as powders that are easy to snort. Physical signs include constant sniffling without a cold, recurring respiratory infections, frequent nosebleeds, and discolored nasal discharge. Behaviorally, sudden mood changes, pulling away from family, dropping old hobbies, and spending more time alone can all signal that opioid use is escalating.

The article also highlights paraphernalia linked to snorting. Straws, paper tubes, tightly rolled dollar bills, credit or playing cards, small razors, and mirrors may be used to prepare and inhale the drug. On their own, these objects aren?t proof of a problem, but when they appear together alongside physical and behavioral changes, they?re a strong warning sign.

From there, the blog explains why people snort opioids. Snorting delivers the drug through the nasal mucous membrane directly into the bloodstream, so the high arrives faster than it would if the pill were swallowed and digested. Any extended-release safeguards are bypassed, so the full dose is released at once. The article notes that some people see snorting as less risky than injecting, yet many of the same dangers remain. Damaged nasal tissue bleeds easily, and shared straws can transmit bloodborne infections such as HIV and hepatitis.

Injecting and snorting are described as distinct routes with overlapping risks, not as ?safer? or ?unsafe? options. Injecting can cause vein damage, abscesses, clots, and serious infections in the heart and bones. Snorting concentrates the harm in the nose and airway, contributing to chronic sniffling, nosebleeds, discolored discharge, breathing issues, and respiratory infections. Over time, snorting can damage the nasal septum, collapse nasal structures, dull the sense of smell and taste, and cause sores in the mouth and throat that are prone to infection.

The blog underscores that overdose is always a concern. An overdose can happen the first time someone uses opioids. Slow pulse, seizures, uncontrolled vomiting, blue lips or fingertips, low blood pressure, pinpoint pupils, and slowed or stopped breathing are listed as medical emergencies. Naloxone, now available over the counter, can reverse an opioid overdose when used quickly, but emergency care is still essential.

Finally, the article links snorting with the development of OUD. As use continues, people may spend more money on opioids, let work and family responsibilities slide, or take risks to get more drugs. When they stop or cut back, withdrawal symptoms such as sweating, runny nose, mood swings, muscle aches, insomnia, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps often push them back toward use. Psychological symptoms like anxiety, depression, and hopelessness add to that pressure, and any thoughts of self-harm or harming others call for immediate medical help.

The blog closes by outlining how ReVIDA® Recovery supports people living with OUD. Clinics across Appalachia provide medication-assisted treatment with Suboxone® and Sublocade®, combined with individual and group therapy, and help with transportation, housing, and other practical needs. The goal is to reduce cravings, ease withdrawal, and make recovery realistic in everyday life.

Families, referral partners, and community members who?d like to read the full blog or learn more about OUD treatment at ReVIDA® Recovery can call 423-631-0432 for information about programs, insurance options, and next steps in care.

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ReVIDA® Recovery Morristown

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